

PENSACOLA, FL — Driving through the small town of Tallapoosa, Georgia, with a population of about 3,500, it's hard to imagine that it would be home to an impressive park full of monuments to veterans from around the United States and those who perished in the September 11, 2001 attacks.

"I came back from Vietnam, this is my hometown, there wasn't anything here to honor our veterans and I didn't want that to go unnoticed," Sammy Robinson, a resident of Tallapoosa and Vietnam veteran, told The Daily Caller News Foundation, as he showed the park to members of Concerned Veterans of America who are currently on their east coast tour highlighting veterans issues.

For twenty years he wished to commemorate those who had fought for the U.S. and for those who had died, and one day he decided that's exactly what he would do.

"One day in 1991, I got eight old veterans together and I said that 'I'm going to build a park. If you want to be part, okay, if you don't, don't get in our way,'" Robinson said.

The park was built by all volunteer labor, mostly from veterans, as well as county volunteers, and was built with money they raised themselves, without government help.

According to Robinson, nearly \$750,000 dollars was raised to create the park and it takes about \$7,000 dollars a year to maintain it — which is raised from donations.

Haralson County Veterans Memorial Park is dotted with black granite monuments, and the path that connects them all is lined with plaques with the names of veterans from all over the country who were honorably discharged and wanted to donate to have their names displayed. According to Sammy, each plaque costs \$250.

"All of the stones that you see here are anyone that has an honorable discharge that would like to be put here, and we have them here from almost every state in the nation, including Hawaii and Alaska," Robinson said.

In One section of the park — called Medal of Honor Park — a fountain to Medal of Honor recipient Ray McKibben, a U.S. Army sergeant who was decorated for his actions during the Vietnam War, lay at the park's center, with the plaques of other veterans lining the small square surrounding it.

Taking one path away from McKibben's monument, one comes upon the Wall of Tears monument — dedicated on July 4, 2005 — to honor women who have served in the U.S. armed forces — some who have passed away as well as those who are still in service.

"Let the generations know that the women in uniform also guaranteed their freedom," reads one of the sections of the granite wall.

"It is to honor the women of this nation that have been in the uniform," Robinson said. "People forgot that they were a part of that era and we wanted to make sure that didn't happen. A lot of the faces on there are local people."

The park also features a memorial to those who perished in the 9/11 terror attacks, which was added on September 11, 2011, that features a miniature World Trade Center-shaped memorial as well as a piece of mangled iron from one of the Twin Towers.

There is an eternal flame that sits on top of granite slabs that list the casualties and the numbers who served in every American conflict and war from 1775 to Iraq and Afghanistan.

“This lists every conflict or war that the United States has been in since 1775, all the way up until today, and it has the dead and wounded on it,” Robinson said.

The other section of the park is called League-Lowe Memorial Park, dedicated in 1992 to honor fallen soldiers Barry R. League and Jerome Lowe.

Robinson graduated from high school with League, knew his family, and League was even in Robinson’s wedding. They were also in the same division in the Army, though neither knew it. League was killed at Landing Zone Stud while pushing to get marines out of Khe Sanh.

Lowe, an African American U.S. Army sergeant who was killed near Ninh Thun during the Vietnam War, is also from Haralson County, and received several medals for his service, including the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

Also in League-Lowe Memorial Park is an obelisk to the 78 people killed from Haralson County who served in World Wars I and II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

“So far, we haven’t lost any in the war on terror, which is thankful,” Robinson said.

The park also has a replica of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

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Michael Bastasch author

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